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(54) **VALVE SEAT APPARATUS FOR USE WITH FLUID VALVES**

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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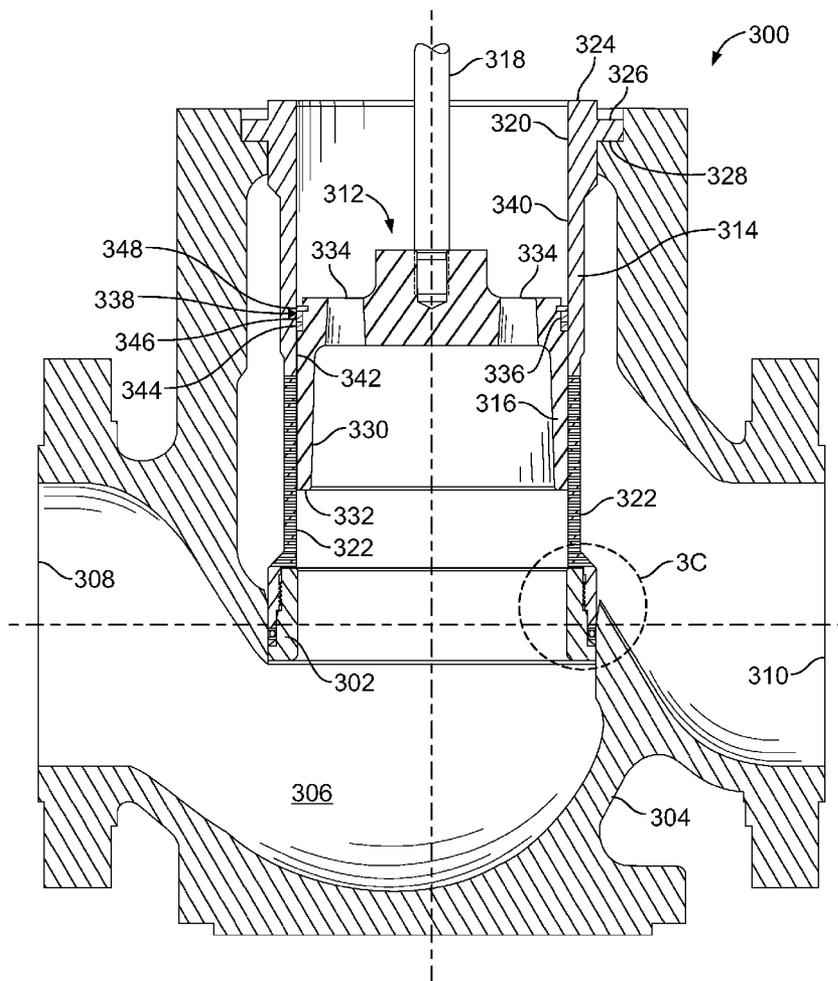
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(63) Continuation of application No. 13/828,539, filed on Mar. 14, 2013.

Publication Classification

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A valve seat apparatus for use with fluid valves is described herein. An example valve seat apparatus includes a seat ring having a central passage therethrough and an outer wall. The outer wall comprises a threaded portion, having a first diameter, to engage a cage of a fluid valve. The outer wall also includes a sealing portion to capture a seal assembly between the sealing portion and a surface of a body of the fluid valve. The sealing portion has a second diameter greater than the first diameter. The outer wall of the example valve seat apparatus further includes a flange portion to capture the seal assembly between the cage and the flange portion. The flange portion extends toward the surface of the body and the sealing portion is to be positioned between the flange portion and the threaded portion. The flange portion has a third diameter greater than the second diameter.



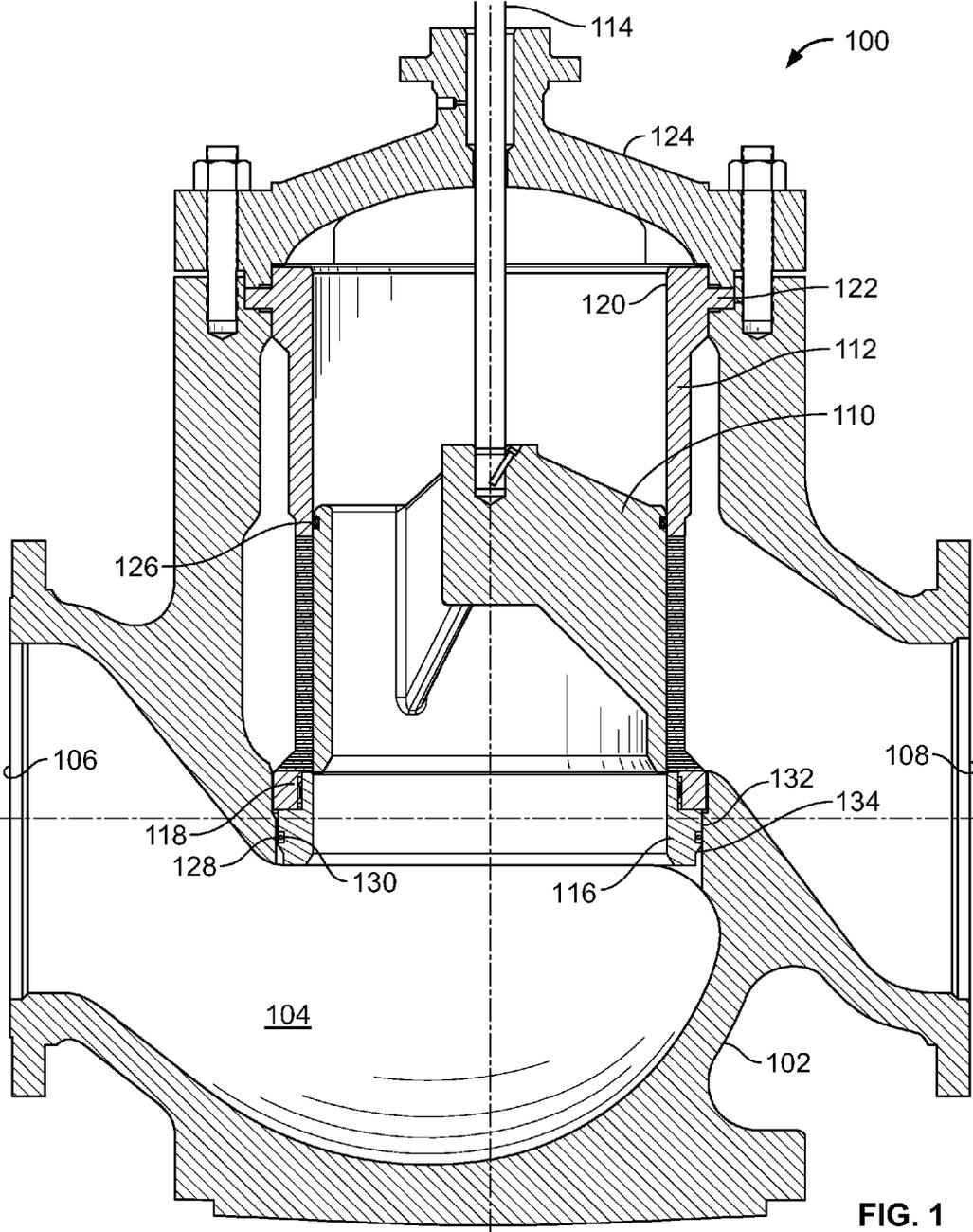


FIG. 1
(Prior Art)

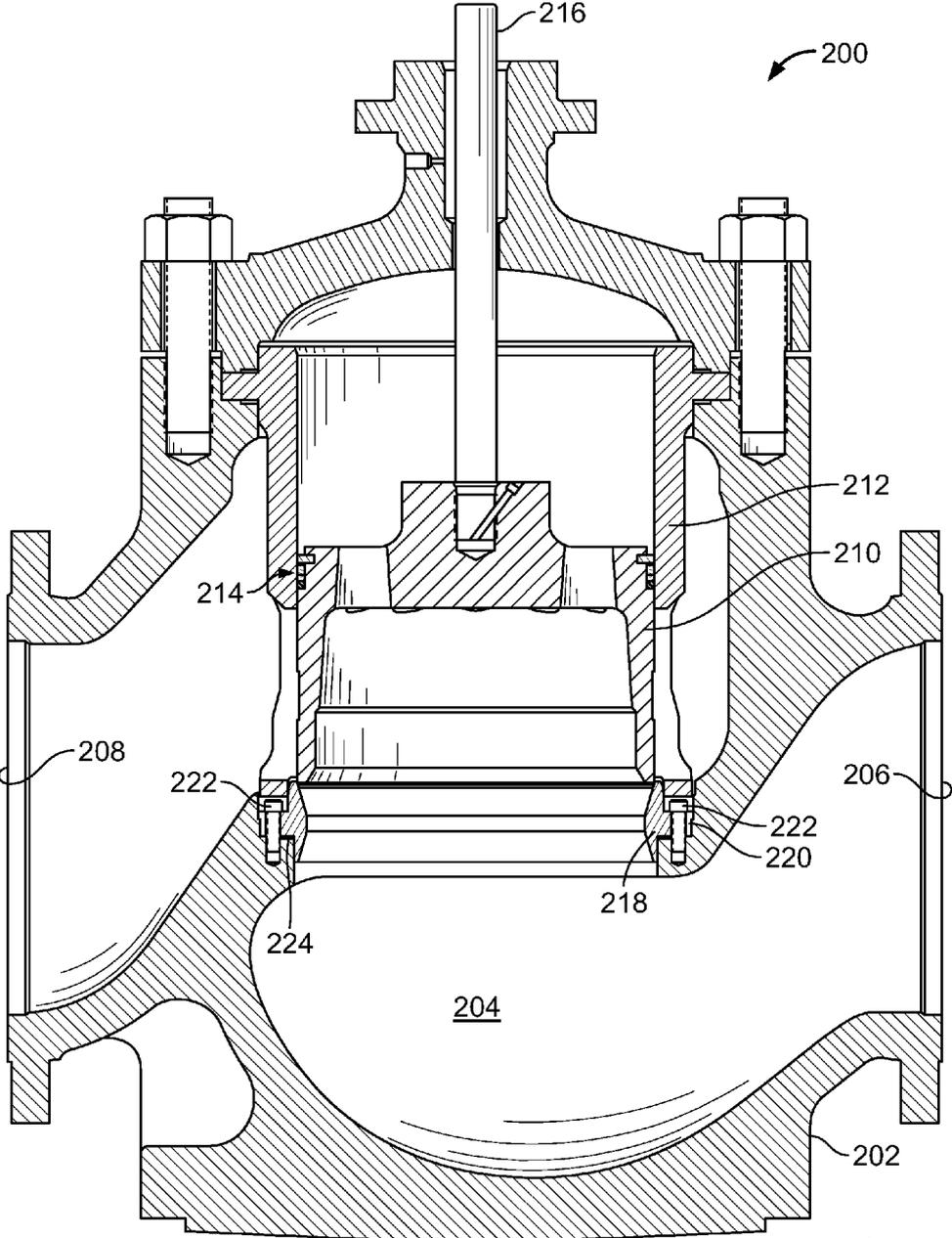


FIG. 2A
(Prior Art)

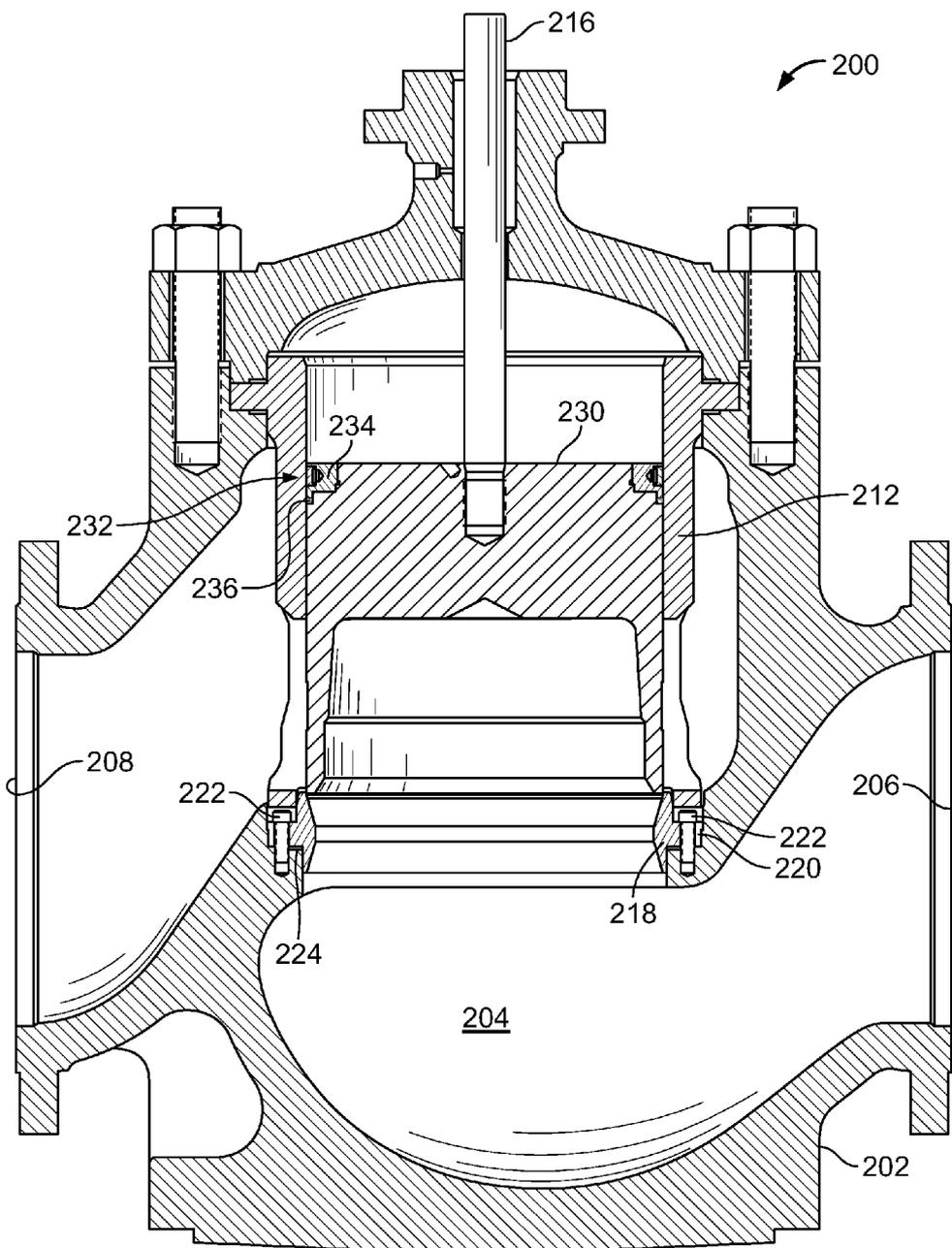


FIG. 2B
(Prior Art)

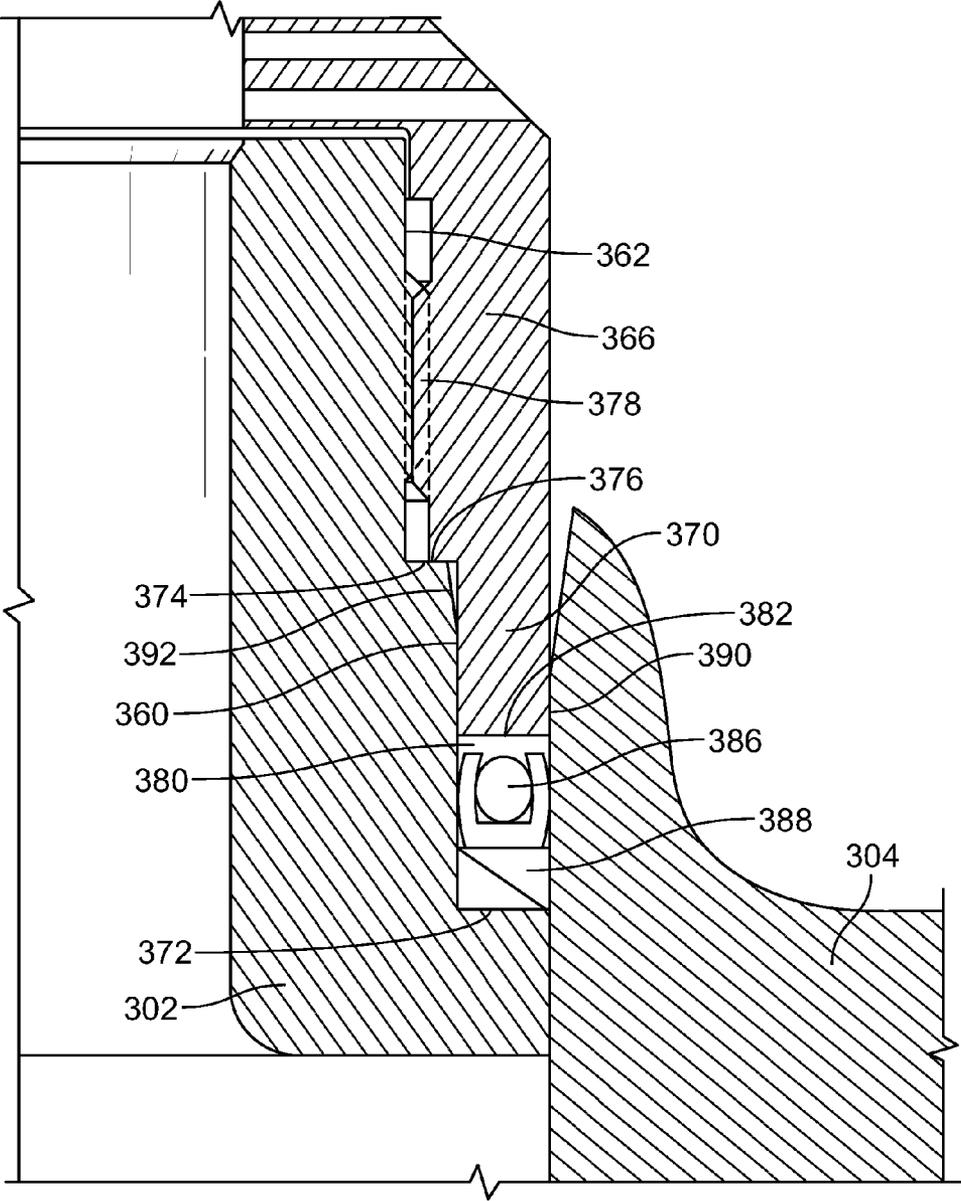


FIG. 3C

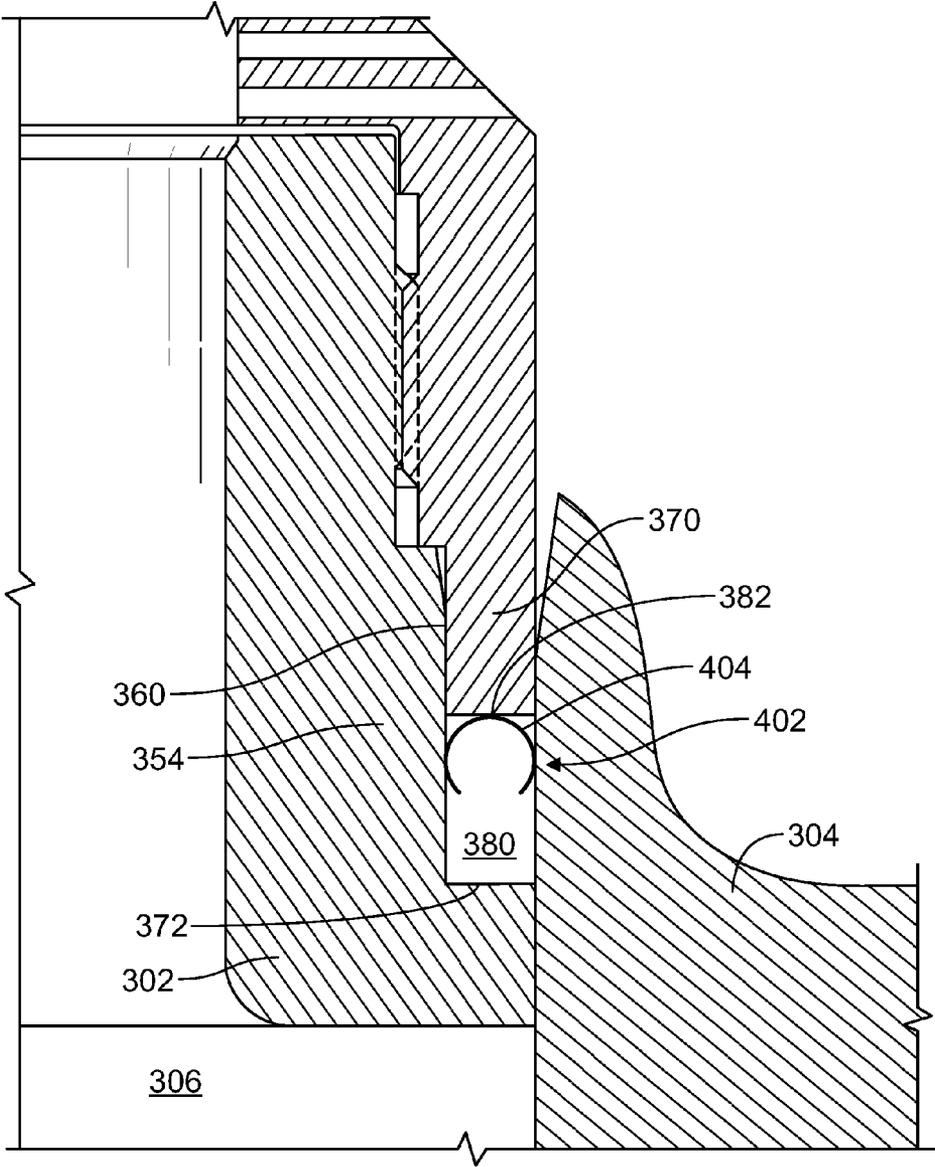


FIG. 4

VALVE SEAT APPARATUS FOR USE WITH FLUID VALVES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This patent arises from a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/828,539, titled “VALVE SEAT APPARATUS FOR USE WITH FLUID VALVES,” filed Mar. 14, 2013, which is hereby incorporated by this reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0002] This disclosure relates generally to valves and, more particularly, to valve seat apparatus for use with fluid valves.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Valves are commonly used in process control systems to control the flow of process fluids. Sliding stem valves (e.g., a gate valve, a globe valve, a diaphragm valve, a pinch valve, etc.) typically have a closure member (e.g., a valve plug) disposed in a fluid path. A valve stem operatively couples the closure member to an actuator to move the closure member between an open position and a closed position to allow or restrict fluid flow between an inlet and an outlet of the valve. Additionally, to provide desired and/or to achieve certain flow characteristics of the fluid, valves often employ a cage interposed within the path of fluid flow between the inlet and the outlet of the valve. A cage may be used to reduce capacity flow, attenuate noise and/or reduce or eliminate cavitation.

[0004] Typically, the size of the valve and the industrial process conditions such as, operational temperatures (e.g., temperatures between -100° F. and 450° F., temperatures greater than 450° F., etc.) of the process fluids, are used to determine the type of valve and/or valve components that may be used such as, for example, the types of seals that may be used to effect a seal between a cage, a valve seat, a valve body and/or a closure member. Further, the type of seals that are used usually determines the valve seat/seal configuration. For example, to provide a seal between a valve seat and a valve body, a seal composed of, for example, polytetrafluoroethylene (e.g., PTFE or Teflon®) is typically disposed between the valve seat and the valve body for use with process fluids having temperatures less than 450° F.

[0005] In some known valves, the seal may be disposed within an annular recess formed around an outer peripheral surface of the valve seat. The valve seat is coupled to a cage (e.g., via threads), which suspends the valve seat within a fluid flow path of the valve body when the cage is coupled to the valve body. The seal prevents fluid leakage between the valve body and the valve seat. However, process fluids having temperatures greater than 450° F. may cause a seal (e.g., a flexible seal) composed of polytetrafluoroethylene to extrude or fail. For process fluids having temperatures greater than 450° F., a valve seat/seal configuration may include a gasket disposed between the valve seat and the valve body. However, such a valve seat/seal configuration requires the valve seat to be fastened (e.g., bolted) to the valve body. Thus, a valve seat/seal configuration of a valve for use with process temperatures greater than 450° F. uses a valve body that is different than a body of a valve having a valve seat/seal configuration for use with process fluid having temperatures less than 450° F.

SUMMARY

[0006] An example valve seat apparatus described herein includes a seat ring having a central passage therethrough and an outer wall. The outer wall of the example valve seat includes a threaded portion to engage a cage of a fluid valve, the threaded portion having a first diameter, and a sealing portion to capture a seal assembly between the sealing portion and a surface of a body of the fluid valve. The sealing portion has a second diameter greater than the first diameter. The outer wall of the example valve seat further includes a flange portion to capture the seal assembly between the cage and the flange portion, the flange portion to extend toward the surface of the body and the sealing portion to be positioned between the flange portion and the threaded portion, the flange portion having a third diameter greater than the second diameter.

[0007] In another example, an example apparatus comprises a fluid valve having a body and a cage disposed in the body. The example apparatus also includes a valve seat coupled to the cage and shaped to form a seal gland, two walls of the seal gland formed by the valve seat, one wall of the seal gland formed by an end of the cage and another wall of the seal gland formed by the fluid valve body.

[0008] Another example apparatus described herein includes a fluid valve body defining a passageway between an inlet and an outlet, a cage disposed within the passageway and a valve seat having an outer wall forming a means for holding a seal assembly with the cage and the valve body.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view of a known valve implemented with a known sealing assembly.

[0010] FIG. 2A is a cross-sectional view of another known valve implemented with another known sealing assembly.

[0011] FIG. 2B is a cross-sectional view of another known valve implemented with another known sealing assembly.

[0012] FIG. 3A is a cross-sectional view of a valve implemented with an example valve seat apparatus described herein.

[0013] FIG. 3B is an enlarged view of the example valve seat apparatus of FIG. 3A.

[0014] FIG. 3C is a further enlarged view of the example valve seat apparatus of FIGS. 3A and 3B.

[0015] FIG. 4 illustrates an enlarged view of the example valve seat apparatus of FIG. 3A with an alternative seal assembly described herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] Certain examples are shown in the above-identified figures and described in detail below. In describing these examples, like or identical reference numbers are used to identify the same or similar elements. The figures are not necessarily to scale and certain features and certain views of the figures may be shown exaggerated in scale or in schematic for clarity and/or conciseness. Additionally, several examples have been described throughout this specification. Any features from any example may be included with, a replacement for, or otherwise combined with other features from other examples.

[0017] The example valve seat apparatus described herein enables different seal assemblies to be used with a given fluid valve body to enable the valve to be used in different operating temperature ranges. In this manner, the example valve seat apparatus enable the use of different types of seal assem-

blies without the need to alter additional valve components (e.g., the cage, the valve seat, the valve body, etc.).

[0018] The example valve seat apparatus described herein may be used with valves having a sliding stem such as, for example, control valves, throttling valves, etc. In some examples, the valve seat apparatus is coupled to a cage, which suspends the valve seat and the seal assembly within a valve body when the cage is coupled to the valve body. The example valve seat apparatus described herein provide a modular valve seat that enables interchangeability between different types of sealing assemblies for use with process fluids of widely varying temperatures (e.g., -325° F. to 1100° F.). As a result of the interchangeability provided by the valve seat apparatus described herein, fewer total components are needed to provide a greater variety of seal configurations for fluid valves that can be used with a wide range of process fluid temperatures. In other words, with the example valve seat apparatus described herein, it is not necessary to manufacture and inventory each possible combination of valve seat configuration, cage configuration and/or valve body configuration as is typically required with known valve seat designs. Therefore, the valve seat apparatus described herein enables manufacturing of a single valve body that can receive the valve seat apparatus when used with the different sealing assemblies or configurations.

[0019] More specifically, the valve seat apparatus described herein may receive a first seal assembly for use with process fluids having a first temperature range, for example, between about -100° F. or lower and 450° F., a second seal assembly for use with process fluids having a second temperature range, for example, between about 450° F. and 600° F., or a third seal assembly for use with process fluids having a third temperature range, for example, between about 600° F. and 1100° F., or higher. For example, the first seal assembly may include a polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) or ultra high molecular weight polyethylene seal, the second seal assembly may include a PTFE seal and an anti-extrusion ring, and the third seal assembly may include a bore seal (e.g., a metal seal such as a C-seal). The example valve seat apparatus described herein are capable of accommodating soft seals (e.g., flexible seals) such as, for example, PTFE or ultra high molecular weight polyethylene seals and stiffer non-deformable seals such as, for example, metal seals during high temperature operations. Further, the example valve seat apparatus described herein do not require a separate seal retainer to retain the seal assemblies and, thus, require less manufacturing and maintenance costs. A description of a valve seat capable of accommodating different seal assemblies by use of a seal retainer may be found in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/599,762, titled "VALVE SEAT APPARATUS FOR USE WITH FLUID VALVES," which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

[0020] Before discussing the example valve seat apparatus in detail, a brief description of a known fluid valve **100** is provided below in connection with FIG. 1. The fluid valve **100** illustrated in FIG. 1 includes a valve body **102** that defines a fluid flow passageway **104** between an inlet **106** and an outlet **108**. A valve plug **110** is slidably disposed within a cage **112** and moves between an open position and a closed position to control the fluid flow through the fluid valve **100**. A valve stem **114** couples the valve plug **110** to an actuator (not shown), which moves the valve plug **110** toward and away from a valve seat **116**. The valve seat **116** is coupled to a first end **118** of the cage **112** (e.g., via threads) and a second

end **120** of the cage **112** includes a flange **122** disposed between the valve body **102** and a bonnet **124**. When coupled to the valve body **102**, the cage **112** suspends or retains the valve seat **116** within the valve body **102**.

[0021] In operation, an actuator moves the valve plug **110** away from the valve seat **116** to allow fluid flow through the fluid valve **100** (e.g., the open position) and toward the valve seat **116** to restrict fluid flow through the fluid valve **100**. The valve plug **110** sealingly engages the valve seat **116** to prevent fluid flow through the fluid valve **100** (e.g., the closed position). A plug seal assembly **126** prevents fluid leakage between the valve plug **110** and the cage **112** when the fluid valve **100** is in the closed position (i.e., when the valve plug **110** sealingly engages the valve seat **116**) as shown in FIG. 1.

[0022] A seal **128** composed of an elastomeric material such as a polytetrafluoroethylene is disposed within a channel or annular recess **130** formed at an outer peripheral surface **132** of the valve seat **116**. The valve seat **116** includes a tapered edge or surface **134** (e.g., a chamfered or lead-in surface or edge) to enable or facilitate assembly of the seal **128** with the valve seat **116**. Thus, the seal **128** in this example is flexible to enable the seal **128** to be stretched over and outside of the surface **134** of the valve seat **116** and into the annular recess **130**. The seal **128** (e.g., an O-ring) prevents fluid leakage between the valve seat **116** and the valve body **102**. When the seal **128** is composed of a polytetrafluoroethylene material, the example fluid valve **100** of FIG. 1 may be used with process fluids having temperatures between about -100° F. and 450° F. Process fluids having temperatures greater than 450° F. may cause the seal **128** to extrude and/or disintegrate.

[0023] FIG. 2A illustrates another known valve **200** that may be used with process fluids having temperatures between about 450° F. and 600° F. The fluid valve **200** illustrated in FIG. 2A includes a valve body **202** that defines a fluid flow passageway **204** between an inlet **206** and an outlet **208**. A valve plug **210** is slidably disposed within a cage **212** and moves between an open position and a closed position to control the fluid flow through the fluid valve **200**. The valve plug **210** includes a seal assembly **214** to provide a seal between the valve plug **210** and the cage **212**. A valve stem **216** couples the valve plug **210** to an actuator (not shown), which moves the valve plug **210** toward and away from a valve seat **218**. The valve seat **218** includes a flange **220** (e.g., an annular flange) that receives a plurality of fasteners **222** (e.g., bolts) to couple the valve seat **218** to the valve body **202**. A gasket **224** is disposed between the valve seat **218** and the valve body **202** to reduce or prevent fluid leakage between the valve seat **218** and the valve body **202**.

[0024] The valve seat **218** and valve body **202** configuration shown in FIG. 2A is typically used with process fluid having temperatures between about 450° F. and 600° F. In such a temperature range, a seal made of an elastomeric material (e.g., polytetrafluoroethylene) would not typically be used to provide a seal between the valve seat **218** and the valve body **202** because it may extrude or disintegrate due to the temperature of the process fluid. Additionally, in applications where process fluid temperatures are between -325° F. and -100° F., a seal made of an elastomeric material is not typically used to provide a seal between the valve seat **218** and the valve body **202** because the seal is too stiff (e.g., brittle, non-flexible). Also, the valve seat **218** and the valve body **202**

of the fluid valve 200 are configured differently than the valve seat 116 and the valve body 102 of the fluid valve 100 of FIG. 1.

[0025] FIG. 2B illustrates the valve 200 of FIG. 2A that is implemented with a closure member 230 having a seal assembly 232 for use with process fluids having a temperature range between about 600° F. and 1100° F. In this example, the seal assembly 232 of the closure member 230 includes a retainer 234 (to hold in a graphite piston ring) and a bore seal 236 (e.g., a C-shaped seal) that is made of metal or any other material to provide relatively high resistance to leakage of process fluid around or past the closure member 230 between the closure member 230 and the cage 212 (or the valve body 202) for process fluids having relatively high temperatures (e.g., temperatures greater than about 600° F.).

[0026] Thus, as a result, configurations using different valve body and valve seat configurations are needed to accommodate different process fluid temperature ranges, resulting in larger inventories and increased manufacturing costs.

[0027] FIG. 3A illustrates an example fluid valve 300 implemented with an example valve seat apparatus 302. FIGS. 3B and 3C illustrate enlarged views of the example fluid valve 300 of FIG. 3A. The example fluid valve 300 may receive seal assemblies that may be used in applications having process fluid temperatures between about -325° F. and 1100° F., or higher.

[0028] Referring to FIG. 3A, the fluid valve 300 includes a valve body 304 defining a fluid flow pathway 306 between an inlet 308 and an outlet 310. A valve trim assembly 312 interposes in the fluid flow passageway 306 to control the fluid flow between the inlet 308 and the outlet 310. The valve trim assembly 312 includes internal components of the fluid valve 300 such as, for example, a cage 314, a closure member 316 (e.g., a valve plug, a flow control member, a piston), the valve seat 302 and a valve stem 318.

[0029] The cage 314 is disposed between the inlet 308 and the outlet 310 to provide certain fluid flow characteristics through the valve body 304 (e.g., reduce noise and/or cavitation generated by the flow of fluid through the fluid valve 300). The cage 314 includes a bore 320 to receive (e.g., slidably receive) the closure member 316 and at least one opening 322 through which fluid can flow when the fluid valve 300 is in an open position (i.e., when the closure member 316 is spaced away from the valve seat 302). The cage 314 can be configured in different manners (e.g., the openings 322 having various shapes, sizes or spacing) to provide particular, desirable fluid flow characteristics such as, for example, to control the flow, reduce noise and/or cavitation, to enhance pressure reductions of the process fluid, etc.

[0030] In the illustrated example, the cage 314 is a substantially unitary structure. A first end 324 of the cage 314 includes a flange 326 that engages a surface 328 of the valve body 304. A bonnet (e.g., the bonnet 124 of FIG. 1) engages the flange 326 to retain the cage 314 within the valve body 304. When the cage 314 is coupled to the valve body 304, the cage 314 suspends or retains the valve seat 302 within the valve body 304. Thus, the cage 314 can also facilitate maintenance, removal, and/or replacement of the other components of the valve trim assembly 312.

[0031] The cage 314 guides the closure member 316 and provides lateral stability, balance, and alignment as the closure member 316 moves between the open position and a closed position, thereby reducing vibrations and other

mechanical stress. The closure member 316 closely fits within the bore 320 and is to slide within the cage 314 between the closed position, in which the closure member 316 obstructs the openings 322 of the cage 314, and the open position, in which the closure member 316 is clear of (i.e., does not block) at least a portion of the openings 322.

[0032] In the illustrated example, the closure member 316 is depicted as a valve plug having a cylindrical body 330 and a sealing surface 332. However, in other examples, the closure member 316 may be a disk or any other structure to vary the flow of fluid through the fluid valve 300. The valve stem 318 operatively couples the closure member 316 to an actuator (not shown). In this example, the closure member 316 includes channels or conduits 334 to balance or equalize the forces exerted across the closure member 316 by the pressures of the process fluid acting across the closure member 316. As a result, a smaller actuating force can be provided to move the closure member 316 between the open and closed positions. The closure member 316 also includes a recessed portion 336 to receive a plug seal assembly 338. The plug seal assembly 338 engages an inner surface 340 of the cage 314 to prevent fluid from leaking between the cage 314 and an outer surface 342 of the closure member 316. The plug seal assembly 338 includes a seal member 344 (e.g., an O-ring) composed of an elastomeric material and an anti-extrusion ring 346. In some examples, the anti-extrusion ring 346 prevents the seal member 344 from extruding between the outer surface 342 of the closure member 316 and the inner surface 340 of the cage 314 when the process fluid temperature is between about 450° F. and 600° F. The plug seal assembly 338 may also include a backing ring or retaining ring 348.

[0033] As most clearly shown in FIGS. 3B and 3C, the valve seat 302 is a seat ring having an inner surface 350 and an outer surface (e.g., an outer peripheral edge, an outer wall) comprised of three portions (e.g., surfaces, sections, walls, etc.): a first portion 352; a second portion 354; and a third portion 356. In the example shown, the first portion 352 is a flange portion having an outer wall 358 with a first diameter, the second portion 354 is a sealing portion having an outer wall 360 with a second diameter, and the third portion 356 is a coupling portion having an outer wall 362 with a third diameter. In the example shown, the first diameter is greater than the second diameter and the third diameter, and the second diameter is greater than the third diameter, such that the three portions 352, 354, 356 have a step-like profile cross-section. In the example shown, the outer walls 358, 360, 362 of the three portions 358, 360, 362 are substantially parallel to one another. However, in other examples, the outer walls 358, 360, 362 may not be substantially parallel to one another.

[0034] The coupling portion 356 is adjacent a first end 364 of the valve seat 302 to receive a portion or second end 366 of the cage 314. The valve seat 302 has a second end 368 opposite the first end 364. As shown, the sealing portion 354 is located between the coupling portion 356 and the flange portion 352 of the valve seat 302. The sealing portion 354 is to receive an extension 370 of the second end 366 of the cage 314. The flange portion 352 has a first step 372 (e.g., a shoulder, a ledge, a lip, a wall, a surface) formed (e.g., via machining) in the outer surface of the valve seat 302 between the flange portion 352 and the sealing portion 354 (e.g., between the outer wall 358 of the flange portion 352 and the outer wall 360 of the sealing portion 354). The sealing portion 354 has a second step 374 formed in the outer surface of the valve seat 302 between the sealing portion 354 and the coupling portion

356 (e.g., between the outer wall 360 of the sealing portion 354 and the outer wall 362 of the coupling portion 356). In the example shown, the first step 372 and the second step 374 are substantially perpendicular to the outer walls 358, 360, 362 of the respective portions 352, 354, 356. In the example shown, the first step 372 and the second step 374 are substantially parallel to one another. However, in other examples, the first step 372 and the second step 374 may be not be substantially parallel. In the example shown, a shoulder 376 (e.g., a ledge, a lip, a wall, a surface) is formed in the cage 314 between the second end 366 of the cage 314 and the extension 370. In this example, the first end 364 of the valve seat 302 is coupled to the second end 366 of the cage 314 via threads 378, which are disposed on the outer wall 362 of the coupling portion 356 and the inside of the cage 314.

[0035] When the valve seat 302 is coupled to the cage 314 (e.g., via the threads 378), a cavity 380 (e.g., a gland, an annular gland, a groove, a seal gland, etc.) is defined by the first step 372 of the valve seat 302, a bottom surface 382 (e.g., edge) of the extension 370, and the outer wall 360 of the sealing portion 354. A seal or seal assembly 384 (e.g., a first seal assembly) is disposed within the cavity 380. As shown in this example, the seal assembly 384 includes a seal 386 (e.g., an omni-seal, an o-ring, etc.) and anti-extrusion rings 388. The seal 386 may be composed of an elastomeric or fluoropolymer such as, for example PTFE. The anti-extrusion ring 388 (e.g., a hard plastic ring) provides additional sealing to prevent the seal 386 from extruding between the valve seat 302 and the valve body 304 when the fluid valve 300 is used with process fluids having temperatures between about 450° F. and 600° F. In some examples, for process fluids having temperatures less than about 450° F., the anti-extrusion ring 388 may not be used. As shown, the anti-extrusion ring 388 is disposed between the first step 372 and the seal 386, and the seal 386 is disposed between the anti-extrusion ring 388 and the bottom surface 382 of the extension 370. The seal assembly 384 engages a surface 390 (FIG. 3C) of the valve body 304 when the valve seat 302 (and the cage 314) is coupled to the valve body 304. In the example shown, a portion of the surface 390 of the valve body 304 may be tapered to provide a smooth transition and reduce sharp edges for assembling the cage 314 and valve seat 302.

[0036] As illustrated more clearly in FIG. 3C, the valve seat 302 also includes a tapered edge 392 between the outer wall 360 and the second step 374 of the sealing portion 354. In the example shown, the tapered edge 392 provides a lead-in angle to facilitate assembly of the seal assembly 384. In some examples, during assembly of the valve seat 302, the anti-extrusion ring 388 and the seal 386 are slid over the tapered edge 392 and onto the sealing portion 354 of the valve seat 302. The valve seat 302 may then be coupled (e.g., via the threads 378) to the second end 366 of the cage 314. As the valve seat 302 is threaded onto the cage 314, the extension 370 of the cage 314 slidably engages the outer wall 360 of the sealing portion 354. In the example shown, the valve seat 302 is screwed into the cage 314 until the second step 374 of the valve seat 302 engages the shoulder 376 of the cage 314. Therefore, the width (e.g., the length) of the cavity 380 may be controlled by the placement of the second step 374 in the valve seat 302 and the shoulder 376 in the cage 314. Thus, the placement of these two surfaces may be used to control the width of the cavity 380.

[0037] In operation, an actuator (e.g., a pneumatic actuator) moves the valve stem 318 and, thus, the closure member 316

between the closed position at which the closure member 316 is in sealing engagement with the valve seat 302 to restrict or prevent fluid flow through the fluid valve 300 and the fully open or maximum flow rate position at which the closure member 316 is spaced away from the valve seat 302 and the openings 322 of the cage 314 to allow fluid flow through the fluid valve 300. In the open position, fluid flows between the inlet 308, through the openings 322 of the cage and through the outlet 310. In the closed position, the closure member 316 obstructs the openings 322 of the cage 314 and the sealing surface 332 sealingly engages the valve seat 302 to prevent fluid flow between the inlet 308 and the outlet 310.

[0038] The seal assembly 384 provides a seal between the valve body 304 and the valve seat 302. Leakage between the valve body 304 and the valve seat 302 (and between the closure member 316 and the cage 314) may affect the shut-off classification of the fluid valve 300. The seal assembly 384 is disposed between the valve seat 302 and the valve body 304 to prevent leakage between the inlet 308 and the outlet 310 of the fluid valve 300 when the closure member 316 is in the closed position to improve the shut-off classification of the fluid valve 300.

[0039] FIG. 4 illustrates the valve seat 302 of FIGS. 3A-3C having another example seal assembly 402 (e.g., a second seal assembly). As shown, the cavity 380 is defined by the first step 372 of the valve seat 302, the bottom surface 382 of the extension 370 and the outer wall 360 sealing portion 354. The seal assembly 402 is disposed within the cavity 380 of the valve seat 302. In this example, the seal assembly 402 includes a bore seal 404 (e.g., a C-shaped seal) that is made of metal or any other material that is highly resistant to temperatures greater than about 600° F. The bore seal 404 can resist such high temperatures and provides a seal between the valve seat 302 and the valve body 304. Depending on the flow direction of the fluid flowing through the passageway 306, the bore seal 404 may be disposed within the cavity 380 with an opening of the bore seal 404 facing the direction of the fluid flow.

[0040] The example valve seat 302 described herein provides modular valve seats that accommodate or receive a first seal assembly (e.g., the seal 386 and the anti-extrusion ring 388) for use with process fluids having a first temperature range (e.g., between about -100° F. or lower and 600° F.) that is interchangeable with a second seal assembly (e.g., the seal 404) for use with process fluids having a second temperature range (e.g., between about 600° F. and 1100° F., or higher). As a result, the example valve seat apparatus described herein significantly reduces manufacturing costs and inventory costs associated with, for example, the fluid valves 100 and 200 of FIGS. 1 and 2, respectively. Thus, the example valve seat apparatus described herein enables different seal assemblies to be used with the same valve seat/body configuration.

[0041] Although only a few types of seals are described herein, the example valve seat 302 is capable of receiving other seals and seal assembly components including flexible seals and non-flexible seals (e.g., stiff seals) such as, for example, omni-seals, spring-loaded seals, seat ring-to-body web seals, c-seals, cryogenic seals, anti-extrusion rings, flat gaskets, backing rings, etc. For example, the valve seat 302 may accommodate a cryogenic seal (e.g., a stiff seal) for use in process fluids having a temperature range about -350 and -100° F. The example valve seat apparatus disclosed herein enables different types of seals and/or seal assemblies to be dropped into the seal gland.

[0042] Although certain apparatus have been described herein, the scope of coverage of this patent is not limited thereto. To the contrary, this patent covers all apparatus fairly falling within the scope of the appended claims either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:
 - a cage to be disposed in a fluid valve, the cage including:
 - a main portion, an inner wall of the main portion having a first inner diameter; and
 - an extension extending from the main portion, an inner wall of the extension having a second inner diameter greater than the first inner diameter; and
 - a seat ring to be coupled to the cage, the seat ring having an outer wall, the outer wall including:
 - a threaded portion to engage the cage, the threaded portion having a first outer diameter;
 - a sealing portion to capture a seal assembly between the sealing portion and a surface of a body of the fluid valve, the sealing portion having a second outer diameter greater than the first outer diameter;
 - a flange portion having a third outer diameter greater than the second outer diameter, the sealing portion being between the flange portion and the threaded portion; and
 - a step between the flange portion and the sealing portion, an annular gland being defined by the step, the sealing portion and a bottom surface of the extension when the seat ring is coupled to the cage, the annular gland to receive the seal assembly.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the step is a first step, the outer wall further including a second step between the sealing portion and the threaded portion.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the cage further includes a shoulder between the inner wall of the main portion and the inner wall of the extension, the shoulder to engage the second step when the seat ring is coupled to the cage.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the inner wall of the main portion of the cage includes threads to threadably couple with the threaded portion of the outer wall of the seat ring.
5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein, when the threaded portion of the seat ring is threadably coupled to the main portion of the cage, the inner wall of the extension extends along the sealing portion of the outer wall of the seat ring.
6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the seal assembly is a first seal assembly, and wherein the first seal assembly is interchangeable with a second seal assembly different from the first seal assembly.
7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the first seal assembly includes a polytetrafluoroethylene seal and the second seal assembly includes a metal seal having a C-shaped cross-section
8. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the first seal assembly is for use with process fluids having temperatures less than 600° F. and the second seal assembly is for use with process fluids having temperatures greater than about 600° F.
9. An apparatus comprising:
 - a cage to be disposed in a fluid valve, the cage including:
 - a main portion, an inner wall of the main portion having a first inner diameter, the inner wall of the main portion having first threads; and

- an extension extending from the main portion, an inner wall of the extension having a second inner diameter greater than the first inner diameter; and
- a seat ring to be coupled to the cage, the seat ring including:
 - a first portion, an outer wall of the first portion having a first outer diameter, the outer wall of the first portion having second threads to be threadably coupled to the first threads;
 - a second portion, the outer wall of the second portion having a second outer diameter greater than the first outer diameter; and
 - a third portion, an outer wall of the third portion having a third outer diameter greater than the second outer diameter, the second portion positioned between the third portion and the first portion.
 10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein, when the seat ring is coupled to the cage, the inner wall of the extension and the outer wall of the second portion are parallel and facing each other.
 11. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the seat ring is a substantially unitary piece or structure.
 12. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the seat ring includes a step between the outer wall of the second portion and the outer wall of the third portion.
 13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein, when the seat ring is coupled to the cage, a seal gland is formed by the outer wall of the second section, a bottom surface of the extension, a surface of the fluid valve, and the step.
 14. The apparatus of claim 13, further including means for sealing, the means for sealing disposed within the seal gland.
 15. An apparatus comprising:
 - a cage to be disposed in a fluid valve, the cage including:
 - a main portion, an inner wall of the main portion having a first inner diameter; and
 - an extension extending from the main portion, an inner wall of the extension having a second inner diameter greater than the first inner diameter; and
 - a seat ring to be coupled to the cage, the seat ring having an outer wall, the outer wall including:
 - a threaded portion to be threadably coupled to the cage, the threaded portion having a first outer diameter;
 - a sealing portion to capture a seal assembly between the sealing portion and a surface of a body of the fluid valve, the sealing portion having a second outer diameter greater than the first outer diameter;
 - a flange portion having a third outer diameter greater than the second outer diameter, the sealing portion positioned between the flange portion and the threaded portion; and
 - a step between the sealing portion and the flange portion, wherein the seat ring is to be threaded onto the cage to capture the seal assembly between the step and a bottom surface of the extension.
 16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein, when the seat ring is coupled to the cage, a cavity is formed between the sealing portion, the bottom surface of the extension, the body of the fluid valve, and the step, the seal assembly disposed in the cavity.
 17. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the first inner diameter is substantially the same as the first outer diameter, and the second inner diameter is substantially the same as the second outer diameter.
 18. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein, to remove the seal assembly, the seat ring is to be unthreaded from the cage.

19. The apparatus of claim **15**, wherein the seal assembly is a first seal assembly, and wherein the first seal assembly is interchangeable with a second seal assembly different from the first seal assembly.

20. The apparatus of claim **15**, wherein the seal assembly includes at least one of a cryogenic seal, a polytetrafluoroethylene seal, an anti-extrusion ring, an omni-seal, a flat gasket, a spring-loaded seal or a c-seal.

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